*The biblical psalms feature several remarkable expressions of lament. In these laments, the worshiping community expresses grief and frustration at the brokenness of the world, even in situations in which the community is not directly culpable or blameworthy. These biblical laments witness to God’s desire for honesty in worship. No experience in life is too difficult to be brought before God.*

*A lament is an implicit act of faith in which the community of faith turns to God as its only source of hope and comfort. Faith and hope are explicit in Psalm 42, for example, in which the lament “My tears have been my food day and night” leads to a statement of resolute trust: “Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God” (vv. 3, 5-6, NRSV). – The Worship Sourcebook*

We are all aware of the ways that our lives have changed in the past several weeks. Many of us may now be feeling the full impact of those changes. As a church community we now live in the reality that we will not gather physically for worship on Easter morning. On the day when we celebrate the physical resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ, it seems unfathomable that we would not be together in the physical sense. Yet, this is our reality. I believe it would be beneficial for each one of us to lament that fact, to grieve the loss of that experience, and to lay that all before God. I know I need to do that as your pastor because I know how difficult it has been these past three Sundays to walk out of my office through an empty building following the Sunday service. I would encourage all of us to engage in a lament for the losses we are experiencing during this crisis. It may be fitting to do this on Friday or Saturday, as those days are traditionally ones of mourning as darkness in the context of Holy Week.

Here is a guided devotion you could follow:

Opening Prayer: Dear God, silence all voices within our minds but your own. Help us to seek and be able to follow your will. May our prayers be joined with those beloved in the faith, even when we are apart. May we be aware of our sharing in the Spirit. Allow us to come before you with authenticity and vulnerability. Amen.

Scripture Psalm 42:1-6

*As the deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.*

*My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?*

*My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually,*

*“Where is your God?” These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:*

*how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God,*

*with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.*

*Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?*

*Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.*

Lament: Spend the next few moments before the Lord, using these phrases to guide you lament…

How long O Lord…Why O Lord…I long for…I miss…

Closing Prayer: O Creator and Mighty God, you have promised strength for the weak, rest for the laborers, light for the way, grace for the trials, help from above, unfailing sympathy, undying love. O Creator and Mighty God, help us to continue in your promise. Amen.